The Senate passed a bipartisan bill on Wednesday that raises the age to marry to 16 in North Carolina and limits the age difference among the parties to 4 years.

Senator Nickel said, “This bill will help keep our kids safe and modernize our antiquated marriage laws. Senate Bill 35 will end North Carolina’s place as a destination for child marriage and a sanctuary state for statutory rape.”

14 and 15-year-old children will no longer be able to be married in North Carolina under this bill. Alaska is the only other state to currently allow 14 and 15-year olds to get married.

Senator Nickel said, “I applaud my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for coming together to reach a compromise on this issue. A 49-year-old man will no longer be able to get married to a 17 year old child, within our borders, when this bill becomes law.”

The compromise reached at the last minute will still allow 16 and 17-year-olds to get married - but only to those who are less than four years older. This puts North Carolina in line with a bigger majority of states.